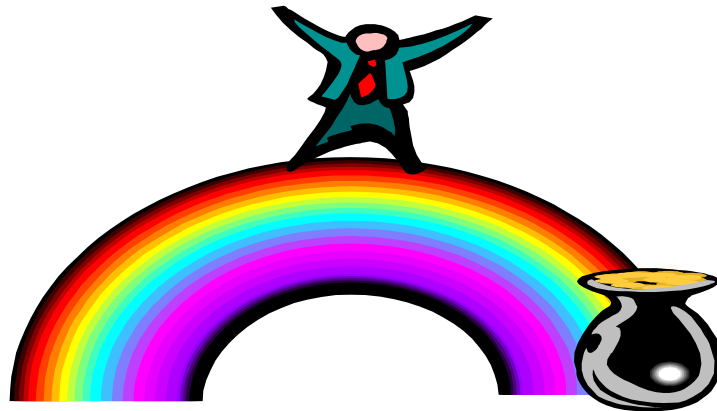




**Office of Quality Assurance (QA)
Division of Developmental Disabilities
(DDD)**

**Continuous Quality Improvement
(CQI) Project**



Annual Summary Report

July 2005 - June 2006

**Craig S. Stenning
Acting Executive Director**

**Susan L. Babin
Administrator**

**Nick Asermelly
CQI Coordinator**

A. CQI Background Information

The CQI Project is administered by Sue Babin and Nick Asermelly from the Office of Quality Assurance (QA), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). A QA staff person and one or two CQI Resource Specialists, who are people with a disability, work collaboratively together for each CQI visit.

The visit involves three different components that typically include spending 2-5 days at an agency for the following:

1. The *Administrative Interview* is generally conducted by Sue Babin, Administrator, Office of Quality Assurance. This Interview generally involves the Executive Director and his/her administrative staff, Board President, Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, an individual who receives support/services from the agency and the DDD social caseworker/supervisor. Individuals have the opportunity to respond to the following questions:
 - *What is going really well?*
 - *What needs improvement?*
 - *What are critical or strategic areas that need to be immediately addressed?*
 - *What makes your agency unique? What are the agency strengths/highlights?*
2. *Site Visit Observations* are organized to various programs/homes and other highlights of services/ supports provided by the agency. The agency develops the schedule for these visits.
3. Two or three *Focus Groups* with people receiving supports from the agency are organized by the agency. The purpose of the *Focus Groups* is to talk directly with people receiving supports about the quality of their lives and their satisfaction with services. *Focus Groups* are led by the Resource Specialists and are organized to talk with people about their lives and their awareness and knowledge of areas such as:

✓ ***Human Rights,***



✓ ***Choices/Supports,***



✓ ***Community Membership, and***



✓ *Opportunities*



In addition, people in the Focus Groups are asked, **“What Is Really Important To You?”** from a list of possible responses such as *Friends, Jobs, Health, Family, Making Decisions, etc.*

At the end of the week’s visit a *Feedback Meeting* is scheduled with administrative staff from the agency to share a brief summary of the findings.

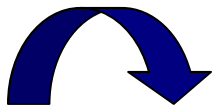
The QA staff person and Resource Specialists develop a *Final Report* on the findings, observations and team recommendations, which is formally presented to the agency at a meeting which typically involves the same individuals who attended the *Administrative Interview*.

The agency is responsible for completing a *Follow Up Response* to respond to any recommendations included in the *Final Report*.

B. Agencies Visited During FY 2006

| Agencies Visited | Dates Visited | People in Focus Groups |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. RHD | January 9, 10, 2006 | 13 |
| 2. LIFE | February 13, 14, 15, 16, 2006 | 26 |
| 3. TTP | February 27, 28 and March 2, 2006 | 29 |
| 4. OSCR | April 26, 27, 28, 2006 | 22 |
| 5. AVATAR | May 8, 9, 10, 11, 2006 | 13 |
| 6. CORLISS | May 31, and June 1, 2006 | 8 |
| 7. PROJECT FRIENDS | June 5, 6, 2006 | 5 |
| | | <i>Total: 116 People</i> |

C. Focus Group Findings



What is *Really* Important to People?

| <i>Area</i> | <i>Number of People</i> |
|--|-------------------------|
| Being treated with dignity and respect | 28 |
| Family | 23 |
| Friendships | 22 |
| Good Jobs | 17 |
| Having Fun | 16 |
| Making Decisions | 6 |
| Health | 4 |

D. Administrative Concerns

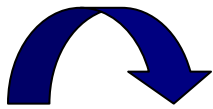
In the *Administrative Interview* the Agency is asked to share their thoughts on areas needing improvement and any critical/serious issues that they are concerned about. Included below are the general areas that were mentioned by most of the agencies involved with the CQI visits.



What Needs *Improvement*?

1. Administrators in the agencies we visited addressed a universal theme of difficulty with *recruiting and the hiring and the retention of quality individuals in support staff positions*, as an area needing improvement. Several Administrators expressed that *this has developed as an increasing area of need as the potential workforce pool has changed over time.*

2. Another need area highlighted by Agencies was the consistent financial strain they have been dealing with in order to have *the capacity to provide good/competitive wages* for their employees.
3. Agencies also addressed *the challenge of finding employment opportunities that match people with disabilities' skills/interests*, as an area in which they could improve their service/support delivery.
4. Additionally, *identifying affordable housing options* for people with disabilities needing a place to live, was also related as an area needing improvement as the cost of rental and purchased properties has climbed in recent years.



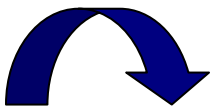
What Are Critical Strategic Areas That Need To Be Immediately Addressed?

1. Several agency Administrators expressed their frustration and dismay at *the lack of annual funding increases from the state* to address cost of living expenses and for personnel/salary increases and identified this as a critical area that needs to be addressed immediately.
2. Agencies expressed as a critical need *the exploring of alternative sources of funding* other than DDD, which they felt needs to be addressed immediately in order to maintain their financial stability and meet the needs of the people they were supporting.
3. Some Agencies were dealing with critical *growth decisions*, such as *should or how* they would grow and maintain quality services. These questions were prompted by an increase in need/demand for services and supports for people that need immediate resolution.



E. Trends from the CQI Visits

The following is a summary of statewide trends from the findings from visiting seven different agencies in the last year and meeting with people with disabilities in the various focus groups.

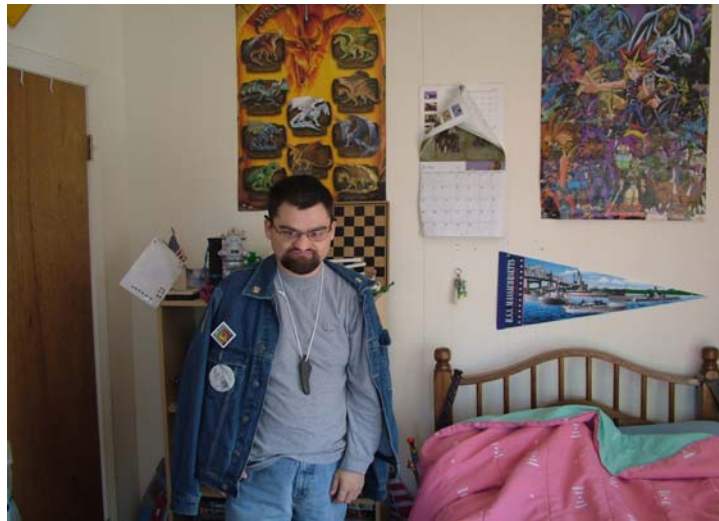


What Is Working Well?

1. Most people shared that they were “*very satisfied*” with the agency that supports them.



2. The living situations of the people we visited are personalized and reflect individual interests.



3. An increasing number of people are involved in *Micro-Businesses* and other commercial enterprises.



4. Most people expressed that their Individualized Plans include what they want in them.
5. Most people have some basic understanding of their human rights and are keenly aware of what they should do if they were abused.
6. All the individuals we talked with have a number of opportunities for a variety of social and recreational activities.



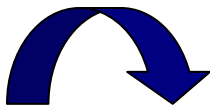
6. The number of people who expressed that they voted in the last election continues to increase every year.



6. People who receive supports have continued to develop a strong sense of “community” and social support networks among themselves and within the agency.



7. There is a growing interest by people with disabilities in “*Artistic Expression*”, as agencies have facilitated the use of different creative mediums by people supported by those agencies.



What Needs Improvement?

1. People with disabilities have a basic understanding of their human rights but need more ongoing education in creative learning formats to *really understand* the more detailed concepts of specific rights.
2. Almost all of the people who attend a person’s annual planning meeting are paid staff or family members. Most meetings have not included friends or people from the community.
3. The majority of people with disabilities do not participate in self-advocacy groups. Some

people are aware of the statewide self advocacy organization, *Advocates in Action*, but do not understand the many diverse activities that this statewide organization is involved with.

4. Most people rely on their staff or families for their transportation needs.
5. Many people expressed an interest in increasing their opportunities for community employment and earning a better paycheck. Most people would like to have some type of real job in the community.

F. Comments from Agency Administrative Staff about the CQI Project and Process

“It is always helpful to learn how the organization looks to others. It is very important that the people we support get to directly voice their opinions about their lives and services they receive.”

...Cathy Valade, Assistant Director, AVATAR, Inc.

“The Process was very helpful, it did not concentrate on paperwork!”

... Mary Ann Wiedenhofer, Assistant Executive Director, LIFE, Inc.

“Our folks were excited about meeting and talking to you about what is really important to them and what they are involved in with their lives and through the services they receive!”

... Ray Memery, Executive Director, RHD, Inc.

“The CQI process was extremely helpful, it was a means of hearing positive feedback from the people we support, and additionally practical advice was shared that we implemented right away.”

... David Reiss, Executive Director, OSCAR.



"People here at Corliss were very pleased with the interaction during the visit and enjoyed the experience very much!"

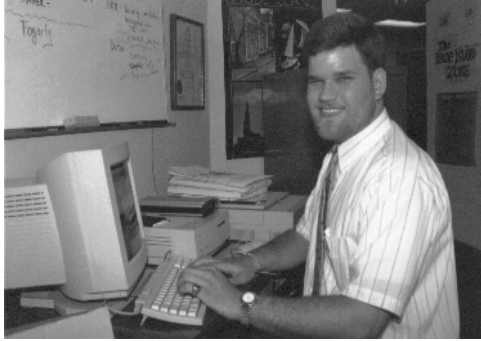
...Jim Hockhousen, Administrator, Corliss, Inc.

"I thought that this QA team was very good! They took the time to learn about our programs and they really interacted with the people we serve. The Team was genuinely interested in listening to feedback from people. This CQI process is helpful because it makes you step back and look at what is going well with services and what needs some improvement. I really see this experience as an opportunity for real quality improvement!"

...Pat Shurtleff, Director Human Services, Project Friends, Town of Coventry

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The CQI Project was originally developed by **Jeremy Vandall** in 1995. Jeremy had been*



working as an advocate for the Office of Quality Assurance, DDD. He designed the format of the CQI Project after meeting with individuals with disabilities from various advocacy groups to talk with them about their suggestions for how information could best be obtained from people.

Jeremy wanted the CQI Project to be different from traditional types of state monitoring activities and to focus on meeting directly with people with disabilities to learn more about what they say about their services/ supports rather than look at documentation in records at the agency.

Jeremy was a very dedicated and kind individual who was committed to the belief that all people with disabilities have something important to say about their lives, we just need to ask them, listen to their comments and he advocated very strongly that everyone can be involved in meaningful ways in their local communities.